Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the specification as detailed below.

On page 3, line 5, please replace the paragraph with the following:

FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary interconnect ~~coupled to a conductive layer~~.

On page 8, lines 12-20, please replace the paragraph with the following:

Once the photoresist layer **408** is formed and patterned, the exposed portion of the insulation layer **402** may be etched to form an interconnect recess **410** and the photoresist **408** may be removed at **306** (see **FIG. 4C**) in accordance with various embodiments. If the insulation layer **402** comprises of polymer based film, a plasma formed from a mixture of oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon monoxide may be used to perform ~~that etch step~~ the etching process. In various embodiments, the interconnect recess **410** that is formed may reach down to the substrate **406**. Following the etching process, the photoresist layer **408** may be removed using, for example, any photoresist removal technique.

On page 8, line 21 - page 9, line 2, please replace the paragraph with the following:

Next, a barrier layer **412** may be deposited or formed on the insulation layer **[[~~102~~]]402** and in the interconnect recess **410** at **308** (see **FIG. 4D**). The barrier layer **412** may inhibit the diffusion of atoms of the interconnect material that will be used to fill the interconnect recess **410** into the surrounding insulation layer **[[~~102~~]]402**. The barrier layer **412** may comprise of materials such as but are not limited to tantalum nitride, tantalum nitride/tantalum bilayer, tungsten nitride, titanium nitride, tantalum silicon nitride, tungsten silicon nitride, titanium silicon nitride, and the like. If the barrier layer **412** comprises of tantalum nitride/tantalum bilayer, a physical vapor deposition process may be used to form the barrier layer **412**. In one embodiment, the barrier layer **412** is deposited to a thickness in the range from about 10 to about 50 nanometers (nm). In some embodiments, the barrier layer **412** and overburden may be planarized using, for example, a chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) process.